



# ST. LUCIA MEDICAL & DENTAL ASSOCIATION

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May 18, 2022

Dr. Honourable Ernest Hillaire  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Tourism,  
Investment, Creative Industry, Culture & Information  
Sir Stanislaus James Building  
Waterfront  
Castries

Dear Minister,

We the Executive and members of the Saint Lucia Medical and Dental Association would like to state our opposition to the concept of open ("unvaxxed") carnival activities. We fully understand the importance of balance and returning to some semblance of normalcy. We acknowledge the complexities of the "lives and livelihoods" conundrum and the economic impact of carnival, but we are duty bound to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the citizens of this country.

The strategy alluded to in this week's press release is far from being the safest and most responsible approach to hosting a mass crowd event during a pandemic particularly, in the context of increasing COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations.

As physicians we are fully aware that the paucity of social activities during this pandemic has had far reaching, negative implications for the mental health of our people but we cannot and will not in good conscience support the sanctioning of unsafe mass crowd events. We must as a country prioritize the wellbeing of our people and the education of our children.

This move will undoubtedly sound the death knell for the vaccination campaign which has been exceedingly sluggish.

We strongly recommend that this decision be reconsidered and that vaccination be a requirement for all attendees of carnival events. Failure to do so will adversely impact our members, fellow healthcare providers and the nation's fragile healthcare infrastructure.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Merle Clarke  
President

CC: Minister for Health and Wellness  
PS: Ministry of Tourism  
PS: Ministry of Health  
Chief Medical Officer  
Chairman: National COVID-19 Management Centre